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Letter dated 11 July 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Lebanese Government is requesting the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of six months, ending on 31 January 2006, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) dated 19 March 1978. In that context, the Lebanese Government seeks to emphasize the following:

1. In view of the circumstances prevailing in the region, it is essential that UNIFIL should continue to be deployed in the performance of its task, since Israel persists in violating Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for respect for the sovereignty of Lebanon. It is continuing its violations of Lebanese sovereignty and threatens the security and peace of Lebanon, despite your repeated calls for it to end those violations, which were singled out by the Security Council and described in its resolution 1583 (2005) as persistent, thereby constituting an escalation of tension in the region.

2. UNIFIL should be maintained without any change in its mandate or alteration of its number, since a key aspect of that mandate, set forth in paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and relating to the restoration of international peace and security to the area, has not yet been fulfilled. Such was the conclusion drawn in paragraph 34 of your report on UNIFIL (S/2005/36) dated 20 January 2005.

3. The Lebanese Government has sought to maintain security in the South, where one third of the Lebanese army is dispersed. The Lebanese security forces are endeavouring to spread calm throughout the region, as mentioned in your briefing note to the Security Council on the Middle East, dated 17 June 2005, in which you applauded the Lebanese authorities for their efforts to prevent acts prejudicial to the security of the South.

4. The Lebanese Government is continuing its efforts to strengthen its authority in the South and promote the social, economic and political revival and development of the area, efforts that consequently gave rise to the organization of parliamentary elections throughout the South on 5 June 2005. The elections were commended by United Nations electoral experts, who affirmed their success and credibility, as well as the free exercise of the democratic process involved.

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5. The Lebanese Government appreciates the very substantial contribution of UNIFIL to the demining of many of the hundreds of thousands of mines left by Israel, which have produced scores of casualties, impeded the free movement of UNIFIL members and made impossible the reclamation of extensive areas of land. In that connection, Lebanon is requesting the Security Council to require Israel to hand over the remaining maps showing the positions of the mines which it left on Lebanese territory.

The Lebanese Government renews its commitment to the peace process in the Middle East with a view to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), on the principle of land for peace and on the Arab peace initiative adopted in Beirut in March 2002.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim **Assaf**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.